

Gargoyles (TV series)

Gargoyles (also known as ***Gargoyles: The Goliath Chronicles*** for season 3) is an animated television series produced by Walt Disney Television Animation, in collaboration with Jade Animation and Tama Productions for its first two seasons and Nelvana for its final, and originally aired from October 24, 1994, to February 15, 1997. The series features a species of nocturnal creatures known as gargoyles that turn to stone during the day.^[5] After spending a thousand years in an enchanted petrified state, the gargoyles (who have been transported from medieval Scotland) are reawakened in modern-day New York City, and take on roles as the city's secret night-time protectors.^[6]

Gargoyles was noted for its relatively dark tone, complex story arcs, and melodrama; character arcs were heavily employed throughout the series, as were Shakespearean themes. The series also received favorable comparisons to *Cybersix*, *Batman: The Animated Series*, and *X-Men*. A video game adaptation and a spin-off comic series were released in 1995. The show's storyline continued from 2006 to 2009 in a comic book series of the same title, produced by Slave Labor Graphics.

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Gargoyles	
	
Also known as	<i>Gargoyles: The Goliath Chronicles</i> (season 3)
Genre	<u>Animation</u> <u>Urban fantasy</u> <u>Mythological</u> <u>Science fantasy</u> <u>Superhero</u> ^{[1][2]}
Created by	<u>Greg Weisman</u>
Written by	(5 or more episodes) <u>Michael Reaves</u> <u>Lydia Marano</u> <u>Brynne Chandler Reaves</u> <u>Cary Bates</u> <u>Gary Sperling</u> <u>Eric Luke</u>
Directed by	(5 or more episodes) <u>Dennis Woodyard</u> <u>Frank Paur</u> <u>Kazuo Terada</u> (season 1 head director) <u>Saburo Hashimoto</u> <u>Bob Kline</u> <u>Charles E. Bastien</u> (season 3)
Voices of	<u>Keith David</u> <u>Salli Richardson</u> <u>Jeff Bennett</u> <u>Bill Fagerbakke</u>

The first two seasons aired in the Disney Afternoon programming block. The first season consisted of 13 episodes, including a five-part opening story. This season's episodes were

Original release	October 24, 1994 ^[4] – February 15, 1997 ^[4]
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almost entirely written by Michael Reaves and Brynne Chandler Reaves. The second season featured 52 episodes, and a long mid-season story arc dubbed by fans as "The Gargoyles World Tour" in which four of the main characters travel the world, encountering other Gargoyles and confronting various mystical and science-fictional dangers. The writing staff was greatly expanded for season two.

Following Disney's purchase of ABC in 1996, the third and final season aired during Saturday mornings on ABC as *Gargoyles: The Goliath Chronicles*.^[5] Behind the scenes, the animation producers and writers had almost completely changed from seasons one and two, while on-screen, the Gargoyles' relationship to the world changed considerably.

Voice cast

The voice cast featured several actors who are alumni of the *Star Trek* franchise, including Marina Sirtis and Jonathan Frakes (respectively, Deanna Troi and William Riker on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), who were featured regularly as principal cast members.^[7] Other *Star Trek* actors had recurring roles on *Gargoyles*, including Michael Dorn (Worf on *TNG* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*), Kate Mulgrew (Kathryn Janeway on *Star Trek: Voyager*), Nichelle Nichols (Uhura on *Star Trek: The Original Series*),^[7] and Brent Spiner (Data on *TNG*);^[7] while Avery Brooks (Benjamin Sisko on *DS9*),^[7] Colm Meaney (Miles O'Brien on *TNG* and *DS9*), and LeVar Burton (Geordi La Forge on *TNG*) made guest appearances.^[7]

Development

The series bears no creator credit, though there were several people who are responsible for the show's format. Michael Reaves, who wrote the first six episodes and was the primary writer/story editor of the show's first two seasons has described himself in respect to *Gargoyles* as "in on the ground floor [of] creating something iconic".^[8] Greg Weisman also describes himself as one of the creators of *Gargoyles*.^[9]

The series' first season was almost entirely written by the husband-and-wife team of Michael Reaves and Brynne Chandler Reaves, who wrote 12 of the 13 episodes; the remaining episode was written by Steve Perry. Weisman officially joined the series as a co-producer with episode 6 (though he also oversaw earlier episodes in his capacity as a Disney executive), and did not have any writing credits on the show until the third season.^[nb 1]

According to Weisman, the first season was developed on a sliding schedule; each phase of developing the thirteen episodes, such as writing, storyboarding, and animating, was given a ten-month period, with significant overlap. After they had delivered the first thirteen episodes, they asked Buena Vista Television to pick up a second season with another thirteen; the show had not yet aired, but Buena Vista agreed for them to start work on six more episodes. Once the show started its weekly syndication run in 1994, it was quickly seen as successful both as a television program and for promoting toy sales, and Buena Vista pushed on the show's team to make the second season 52 episodes so that they could run it daily starting in the 1995 television season. Weisman stated they were not prepared for this given their production methods and the lack of timing to get those episodes ready for a fall 1995 premiere, despite telling Buena Vista this several times. When Disney refused to back down from the 52-episode order, the team decided to expand four-fold to handle the additional episodes. The writing staff grew to include Reaves, Chandler Reaves and Perry, as well as newcomers Lydia Marano, Cary Bates, Gary Sperling, Adam Gilad, Diane Duane and Peter Morwood, amongst others. For this season, story editing duties were handled on a rotating basis by Reaves, Chandler Reaves, Bates and Sperling. Storylines expanded beyond the Manhattan setting and

more characters were added to help creating stories to fill the episode count. Weisman said that he had discussions with Michael Eisner of using *Gargoyles* as a starting point for an action-oriented universe within Disney, comparing this to how Warner Bros. owned DC Comics, and some second season episodes were used to set up potential hooks for these.^[11]

The third season was reduced to thirteen episodes and moved to a Saturday morning slot. This was a result of two factors according to Weisman. The first was changes within Disney itself. Fallout from the death of Disney president Frank Wells led to the divide between Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg, and Katzenberg left to form DreamWorks. Weisman's bosses, Gary Krisel and Bruce Cranston, that had been supportive of *Gargoyles*, also left with Katzenberg for Dreamworks. Further, internal pressure on Eisner from Roy E. Disney forced him to treat *Gargoyles* as part of the studio's older works, thus dropping the larger action universe plans, leaving the show without any support. Secondly, as the second season aired, the highly-publicized trial of O. J. Simpson drew audiences away from *Gargoyles* often due to preemption from the trial's coverage. By the time the trial was over, *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* had become more powerful as a brand. At this point, the show staff did not think they were likely to get a third season, but as Disney had just bought Capital Cities, the owners of the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) network, they needed programming for its Saturday morning block, and had the *Gargoyles* team develop thirteen more episodes for it, now calling the series *The Goliath Chronicles*. Because this was on broadcast stations rather than syndication, the show had to meet different Broadcast Standards and Practices which Weisman stated drastically limited his creativity. While he wrote the first episode and spoke of his concerns to Disney, they had removed him from the team and assigned the rest of the show's run to Nelvana.^[11]

Many Shakespearean characters and stories found their way into the show's storylines, particularly those from *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.^[12] The series was also influenced by medieval Scottish history, as well as television shows ranging from *Disney's Adventures of the Gummi Bears* to *Hill Street Blues*.^[13] The latter in particular inspired the ensemble format of the series and the 30-second "Previously, on *Gargoyles*..." recap found at the beginning of later episodes.^{[14][15]} The former was an influence on the original comedy development of the show, which was subsequently made darker and more serious by first season writers Reaves, Chandler Reaves and Perry.^[16]

New York artist Joe Tomasini brought a suit against Disney, claiming that his copyrighted screenplay and character designs had been copied during the development and production of *Gargoyles*.^[17] The case was ultimately thrown out, after it was proven that Disney did not have access to Tomasini's creations.^[18]

In May 2020, Weisman said in an interview, "*Gargoyles* is still my baby. I don't own it. I don't get a dime off of it being on Disney Plus. And yet I'm so thrilled that it is, I'm thrilled that it represents a chance — even if it's a slim chance — to bring it back. I've always wanted to do more. I've got a timeline for the show that's 315 pages long. I've got notebooks and comp books full of ideas for it. Spinoff notions and all sorts of things. Literally nothing would make me happier than to go back and do more *Gargoyles*."^[19]

Broadcast history

The first two seasons of *Gargoyles* aired in the Republic of Ireland on RTE Two on weekday afternoons from January 6 to April 1997.^[20]

In the United States, reruns of the show aired on USA Network's Action Extreme Team block from 1997 to 1998. The series then moved to Toon Disney (and later on Jetix's lineup) and its successor Disney XD where it aired until 2012. ABC Family also aired the show for a brief time in 2004 as part of its weekday morning Jetix block.

Home media

VHS and Laserdisc

The five-episode pilot "Awakening", edited into a single movie under the title *Gargoyles the Movie: The Heroes Awaken*, was released on VHS and Laserdisc on January 31, 1995, by Buena Vista Home Video.^{[21][22]}

VHS Name	Episode Titles	Release Date	Stock Number
<i>The Hunted</i>	"The Thrill of the Hunt" & "Temptation"	October 11, 1995 ^[23]	5968
<i>The Force of Goliath</i>	"Deadly Force" & "Enter Macbeth"	October 11, 1995 ^[24]	5969
<i>Deeds of Deception</i>	"The Edge" & "Long Way to Morning"	April 9, 1996 ^[25]	6713
<i>Brothers Betrayed</i>	"Her Brother's Keeper" & "Reawakening"	April 9, 1996 ^[26]	6714

DVD releases

On June 25, 2013, Volume Two of Season Two was released.^{[27][28]}

Streaming

On October 14, 2019, it was confirmed that all 3 seasons of *Gargoyles* will be available for streaming on the Disney+ streaming service.^[29]

Reception

IGN ranked *Gargoyles* 45th place on its 2009 list of top 100 animated series, stating: "A decent success at the time, *Gargoyles* has maintained a strong cult following since it ended more than a decade ago".^[30] Hollywood.com featured it on their 2010 list of six cartoons that should be movies.^[31] UGO.com included it on their 2011 top list of legendary medieval and fantasy TV shows.^[32] Doug Walker, also known as the Nostalgia Critic, praised the show: "But in secret, I would be watching every one of them, because it was just that good. I don't know if it really changed anything in terms of kids' shows like *Batman* or *Animaniacs*, but it was certainly a welcome detour from what Disney usually did. It really stood on its own and created some really wonderful and really unique stories. *Gargoyles* is a blast from the past that is sure to live on in the future."^[33] Craig Tomashoff, of People Magazine, said "All the traditional, wholesome Disney elements are in place, from a Beauty and the Beast-like plot line to the gargoyles' old-fashioned sense of nobility and morality. The result is a show that isn't bad, with impressive animation."^[34] Elizabeth Rayne of SyFy praised the series, stating "Gargoyles isn't just a Gothic fairy tale. There is hidden magic where you'd least expect it to lurk in that crumbling castle and, later, the clock tower they stand sentinel at night after night, watching over the city that never sleeps... the rock-solid message about friendship and loyalty embedded into every episode is something... [And] you can't leave the warped humor of this series in the dark, either."^[35] The series hold a rare "100%" rating on the film critic site Rotten Tomatoes.^[36] Less favorable assessments of the series came from animation producer Bruce Timm, who dismissed *Gargoyles* as "kind of namby-pamby... with all that Celtic fantasy crap" in a 1999 interview^[37] and the animation blog Cartoon Brew, which cited the series as an example of the sort of "juvenile mediocrities" that are beloved by the nerd community.^[38]

Film adaptation

A live action film adaptation had been discussed by Disney since the beginning of the show's run. Todd Garner was the executive producer on a proposed project; having admired the series. Rick Baker was hired to create concept art for the characters and even made a maquette. Greg Weisman and Michael Reaves wrote a draft that adapted the five part "Awakening" pilot, but it was rejected. Disney regular Jim Kouf was hired to pen a new draft that established Goliath as a Gaelic warrior named Goliath MacGrath who makes a deal with a good sorcerer to battle an evil one named Morgan. However, he and his men are cursed to "give up [their] flesh and blood and [their] heart will be turned to stone" and are promptly turned into gargoyles and turn to stone upon defeating Morgan. In modern day, the focus shifts to Alex Anderson, described as "Goliath's long lost relative", who returns to New York City following the death of his father. He teams up with Detective Brenna, who is a stand-in for Elisa Maza, and meets the Gargoyles who must battle a revived Morgan. While Disney favored the script, the project was abandoned as it would have been expensive to produce and because the series had ended its run.^[39]

In July 2011, David Elliot and Paul Lovett of *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* were hired to pen a film adaptation of *Gargoyles*.^[40] In June 2018, Jordan Peele pitched his own film version to Disney.^[41] but it was supposedly not picked up.^[39]

Comics

Marvel

Weisman was eventually hired to write for the comic, but Marvel cut the deal with Disney before his run could be produced. Weisman still had his unpublished script for the comic, and would eventually use it as issue #6 of the *Gargoyles: Clan-Building* SLG comic series.^[42]

Slave Labor Graphics

On June 21, 2006, Slave Labor Graphics, in association with CreatureComics, began producing a new *Gargoyles* comic written by Greg Weisman. Weisman wrote the comic book series as a direct sequel to the first and second seasons, ignoring the third season and telling his preferred story in its place.^[43]

In August 2008, Greg Weisman announced that, due to Disney increasing its licensing fees, Slave Labor Graphics would not be renewing its license of *Gargoyles* after it ran out on August 31, 2008. The final two issues of *Bad Guys* and four of *Gargoyles* were released in the comic trades collecting both series in August 2009. Weisman also stated that SLG president Dan Vado had not given up on the *Gargoyles* franchise and hoped to pursue the idea of *Gargoyles graphic novels* in the future.^[44]

Joe Books

On December 24, 2015, Aaron Sparrow revealed that *Gargoyles* was to be adapted into a cinestory comics series published by Joe Books Inc. Originally, the first volume was intended to be released on March 30, 2016, adapting the five-part "Awakening" episodes from the first season,^{[45][46]} and second volume would have adapted the next four episodes ("The Thrill of the Hunt", "Temptation", "Deadly Force", and "Enter MacBeth") following the pilot.^[47] However, on September 29, 2017, Joe Books Inc. confirmed that the cinestory has been cancelled.^[48]

Dynamite Entertainment

On July 22, 2022, it was announced a new ongoing *Gargoyles* comic titled *Gargoyles Season 4* will be published by Dynamite Entertainment. Greg Weisman will write the comic.^[49]

Merchandise

Various merchandise released for the series included a series of 22 five-inch action figures (along with two vehicles and a castle playset) released by Kenner in 1995. A collectible card game, *Gargoyles Stone Warriors Battle Card Game*, was published by Parker Brothers in 1994.^{[50][51]} Other licensed merchandise included numerous other toys and figures, collectible trading card and sticker series, and a wide range of clothing items, books, art supplies, kitchen and bathroom items and supplies, clocks and watches, etc.^{[52][53][54]} A world based on the television series was initially considered for *Kingdom Hearts*, but the idea was scrapped.^[55]

In 2018, various Funko Pop Vinyl figurines was released.^[56] In August 2021, Ravensburger released the *Disney Gargoyles: Awakening* board game.^{[57][58]} Starting in 2021, NECA began producing *Gargoyles*-based merchandise, such a plush toys and figures of the characters.^{[59][60][61]} Quantum Mechanix also produced a line of Q-Fig statues of the *Gargoyles* characters, starting with Goliath and Demona in January 2021.^[62]

Video game

- The Handheld LCD game, titled *Gargoyles – Night Flight*, was released by Tiger Electronics in 1995 in China.^[63]

Cultural impact



Cosplayer Ezmeralda Von Katz as Demona with voice actress Marina Sirtis, on the convention floor at Wizard World Des Moines 2017.

Fan community

In 1997, Weisman began answering fan questions about the series in an online forum at Ask Greg (<http://www.s8.org/gargoyles/askgreg>), revealing, among other things, productions details about the series, in-universe details about the characters, and his plans for the property if it had not been cancelled or if he was able to revive it in the future. Among other revelations, Weisman has detailed spinoffs for the series that reached various stages of development, including *Bad Guys* (for which a leica reel and comics were produced), *Gargoyles 2198*,^[64] *Timedancer*, *Pendragon*, *Dark Ages* and *The New Olympians*.

Conventions

The Gathering of the Gargoyles^[65] was an annual fan convention which began in 1997 and ended in 2009. The Gathering featured several regular guests close to the *Gargoyles* franchise including Greg

The Gathering of the Gargoyles	
Status	Defunct
Genre	Science fantasy
Venue	Various
Location(s)	Various

Weisman and voice actors Keith David and Thom Adcox. The Gathering has featured several recurring special events such as a radio play where attendees audition and take speaking roles, a masquerade ball where attendees dress up as their favorite character, an art show where the many artists within the fandom can display or sell their artwork. Weisman has in the past shown the leica reel of *Bad Guys* at Gatherings. Footage and interviews from the 2004 Gathering appears as an extra feature on the Season 1 DVD of the show.^[66]

Country	USA and Canada
Inaugurated	1997
Most recent	2009
Website	The Gathering of the Gargoyles (http://www.gatheringofthegargoyles.com/)

CONvergence 2014^[67] featured a *Gargoyles* related theme with many guests from the series including Greg Weisman, Thom Adcox, Marina Sirtis, C. Robert Cargill, Scott Lynch, Amy Berg, and Emma Bull. It is a four-day convention held in Bloomington, Minnesota over the Fourth of July weekend. It was done to celebrate the series' 20th anniversary.

References in other works

As a nod to members of the voice cast who worked on both series, the 2001 Pioneer LDC English dub of the anime *3×3 Eyes* contains *Gargoyles* homage scenes. These include a homeless man humming the *Gargoyles* theme and a character who wonders "What could make claw marks in solid stone?"^[68] Shared actors included Brigitte Bako, Bill Fagerbakke, Thom Adcox-Hernandez, Keith David and Ed Asner.

The series finale of the 2017 *DuckTales* animated series, "The Last Adventure!", features an extended *Gargoyles* homage. During a battle, the character Manny the Headless Man-Horse is briefly turned to stone before transforming into his "true form", which heavily resembles a gargoyle. The sequence is accompanied by an excerpt from the *Gargoyles* theme tune, and Manny quotes Goliath's "I live again!" during his transformation, with Keith David providing his voice.^{[69][70]}

A drawing of Goliath made a cameo in the *Amphibia* episode "True Colors".^[71] Creator Matt Braly, who has expressed his love for *Gargoyles*, said the cameo was added in hopes of starting speculations of a multiverse of Disney Television Animation series, as the series is set in multiple universes.^[71] He also cited *Gargoyles* as an influence on *Amphibia*'s overarching story and voice work.^[72]

Notes

- In an interview, Weisman said "During season one, all the writers – including Brynne and Lydia Marano (and a few others) – were working under Michael’s supervision. And Michael was working under my supervision. We broke all the stories together, and I came up with most of the springboards myself and did the final, final pass on every script after Michael was done."^[10]
 - Animation outsourced to AKOM, Animal-Ya, Hanho Heung-Up, Koko Enterprises, Saerom Animation, Sunmin Image Pictures, Sunwoo Animation, Hong Ying Animation, Toon City, Walt Disney Animation Australia, Walt Disney Animation Japan and Wang Film Productions.
 - The animation for Season 3 was originally going to be given by then- fellow Disney subsidiary DIC Productions, L.P., but was eventually given to Nelvana.^[3]

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External links

- [Official website \(http://movies.disney.com/gargoyles\)](http://movies.disney.com/gargoyles) 
 - [Gargoyles \(https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108783/\)](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108783/) at [IMDb](#)
 - [Gargoyles \(http://toonopedia.com/gargoyls.htm\)](http://toonopedia.com/gargoyls.htm) at [Don Markstein's Toonopedia](#)
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 - [Gargoyles \(https://www.bcdb.com/cartoons/Walt_Disney_Studios/Television/Gargoyles/\)](https://www.bcdb.com/cartoons/Walt_Disney_Studios/Television/Gargoyles/) at the [Big Cartoon DataBase](#)
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